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December 29, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Cynthia A. Harding, M.P.H.  
Interim Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia A. Harding". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name and title.

**SUBJECT: NETWORK FOR A HEALTHY CALIFORNIA GRANT – YEAR 2**

This is in response to the September 18, 2012 Board motion instructing the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report to the Board after the close of each year on the Network for a Healthy California – Local Health Department (Network-LHD) grant. Year 2 of the grant ended on September 30, 2014.

The attached report provides updates on progress across the grant's objectives, including milestones and highlights achieved during year 2, in the following categories: Infrastructure/Program Development; Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change; County Nutrition Action Plan; Community/Media Events; Quantitative Outcomes; and Lessons Learned.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

CAH:sb

Attachment

c: Interim Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

**Network for a Healthy California – Local Health Department (Network-LHD)**  
**Year 2 (October 2013 – September 2014) Progress Report**

## **Background**

The Network for a Healthy California – Local Health Department (Network-LHD) grant award is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) through the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for the purpose of educating low-income consumers about healthy eating and active living. As such, the goals, objectives, activities, and timelines of the Network-LHD program have been pre-determined by CDPH and described in a template-style scope of work (SOW), which is included as part of the approved agreement between the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) and CDPH. The overarching goal of Network-LHD is to empower the target audience to select healthy foods and beverages and increase physical activity through nutrition education, social marketing, and environmental changes. The SOW is built around objectives that support this overarching goal.

In Fiscal Year 2012 - 2013 (Year 1 of the grant award), CDPH transitioned its funding model from direct contracting with school districts and community based organizations to one where local health departments (LHDs) serve as the lead local agency for their jurisdiction and are therefore responsible for subcontracting to local entities. DPH released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2013 that resulted in 15 community based agencies being selected to work in three programmatic focus areas – peer to peer, youth engagement, and faith-based programs. A fourth programmatic area of focus, schools, is accomplished through sole source agreements with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).

Changes in CDPH's contracting methodology were accompanied by a broader range of allowable activities that transcend traditional health/nutrition education. These include work on policy, systems, and environmental changes that support improving the nutritional environment and increasing opportunities for physical activity. These changes in both administrative and programmatic approach, collectively referred to as the LHD model, were implemented in all jurisdictions statewide, including in 60 local public health entities. In order to support LHDs in this transition, the Network-LHD SOW includes, by design, support for infrastructure and program development.

## **Infrastructure/Program Development**

In December 2013, we hosted a meeting with our 17 contracted agencies to provide training on allowable costs and strategies for successful program implementation, and to share best practices with those engaged in similar activities. Following this initial meeting there have been multiple formal and informal interactions that have helped improve program delivery and administrative systems.

Grant requirements include the filing of administrative and programmatic reports, responding to requests from CDPH program and contract managers, participating in reviews as requested, and complying with local, state, and federal guidance. All of these activities were met. On May 13-15, 2014, representatives

from USDA, accompanied by the CDPH's Program Compliance Review team, conducted an in-person Management Evaluation of our programmatic elements, in addition to a review of fiscal and administrative processes. The summary of their visit indicated no issues of concern. Further, in follow-up meetings with CDPH administrative leadership, we were informed that USDA was extremely pleased with our progress.

During this reporting period, Network-LHD staff participated in required meetings, trainings, and conferences with the goal of developing strong partnerships to advance policy, systems, and environmental change projects. Examples include "Financing Healthy Food Retail 2.0: Tools and Resources for Effective Program Implementation," "Tools to Create Social Change through Youth Farming and Gardening," and "Evidence-Based, Population-Based Approaches to Improving Cardiovascular Health for School Age Children."

### **Nutrition Education**

Services provided by internal staff and funded partners resulted in nutrition education services being delivered through a range of programmatic channels including schools, youth engagement, adult peer-to-peer, faith, retail, worksites, and early childcare facilities. Primarily, education topics included healthful eating with a focus on increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, and the importance of physical activity.

A total of 321 schools across 19 school districts received classroom-based nutrition instruction, including approximately 120,000 children and 11,000 adults. Nineteen youth engagement teams worked with more than 100 students, who learned nutrition concepts while strategizing about healthy changes in their communities. Funded partner agencies organized 40 peer-to-peer education sites, reaching approximately 7,000 adults in parent centers, farmers' markets, and affordable housing sites. Eighty churches were engaged, reaching close to 25,000 congregants with classes, fairs, social hours, taste tests, and community walks. Healthy cooking demonstrations were conducted in approximately 70 small and large retail markets, including support for four grand opening events and four small market "makeovers." Sixty-five nutrition education classes were offered in 28 worksites, reaching 1,300 low-income wage earners. Nearly 4,000 parents, children, and community members received education at 23 early childcare sites, including health fairs and family events.

### **Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change**

CDPH's adoption and implementation of the Local Health Department model combines nutrition education along with policy, systems, and environmental changes (PSEs) designed to improve nutrition and increase opportunities for physical activity among our target audience. To leverage the combined efforts of our local funded partners and statewide initiatives, CDPH provided a list of the approved strategies that became the focus of our PSE efforts. The list includes a broad range of approaches, designed to impact the target population where they live, work, play, pray, shop, and recreate:

- Childcare: Policies in qualifying childcare centers that support healthy eating and physical activity;

- Schools: Model wellness policies in schools and/or districts, Farm-to-School/Farm-to-Fork procurement systems, and joint use agreements for recreational, gardening, and cooking facilities;
- Retail grocery: Healthy retail strategies to improve grocery store options;
- Assessments: Utilizing community assessments to measure improvements of the food environment in low-income neighborhoods in grocery stores, restaurants, and mobile vending;
- Physical activity: Policies that improve structured physical activity programs for children, youth, families and elders;
- Edible gardens: Identifying and providing opportunities to communities for land, water, and other support for community and school “edible” gardens;
- Worksite: Self-assessment and participation in CDPH’s Worksite Program by qualifying worksites;
- Safe routes: Promoting active transportation (walking and biking) and safe streets for all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Farmers’ markets: Increasing access to farmers’ markets by increasing the number of markets and assisting them in acceptance of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) coupons to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and other systems changes that promote access to healthy foods;
- Food and beverage standards: Promoting healthy food and beverage standards in County welfare offices, public housing units, city parks and recreational facilities and/or vending machines in eligible settings serving low-income populations; providing healthy beverage alternatives in appropriate serving sizes; and ensuring that healthy foods and beverages are available at community events.

Through the combined efforts of our staff and funded partners, approximately 150 PSE projects have been initiated in Year 2. These include 29 focused on local food and beverage standards, including 19 organizational policies that have been adopted; 28 focused on developing community gardens, including 18 newly established or improved community gardens; 27 worksites that have implemented at least one strategy from the CDPH’s California Fit Business Kit; 23 school wellness policy efforts; 19 small neighborhood markets that have made or are planning to make at least one improvement in support of improving healthy choices; 11 early child care settings in which at least one healthy change has been implemented; eight farmers’ markets, including seven that have improved existing operations; seven PSEs that involve the improvement of structured physical activity programs; two PSEs that support active transport initiatives; and one each in the areas of restaurants/mobile vending and joint use agreements in schools.

The following examples illustrate this work and showcase the collaboration of Network-LHD staff and community partners in the process of improving the nutrition and physical activity landscape in Los Angeles County:

*Implementing policy to improve the nutritional quality of food served in early child care settings.* Head Start and State-funded preschool programs work directly with low-income families to promote healthy eating and active living to SNAP-eligible families of children ages 0-5. However, these programs often lack the financial and personnel resources to prioritize nutrition and physical activity initiatives. After conducting a needs assessment for child care providers, ten Head Start and State preschools in the ABC Unified School District identified the

establishment of a policy on food served during celebrations and special occasions as a priority area. Network-LHD staff provided training, technical assistance, printed materials, draft policy, and curricula aimed at improving the nutritional quality of food served during celebrations such as holidays and birthdays. Related policies were drafted, adopted, and are currently being implemented in all ten schools.

*Improving wellness at worksites.* Cardenas CARES, a wellness program for Cardenas Market employees, aims to provide resources to Cardenas employees by offering educational sessions and preventive health screenings. Our worksite staff, in partnership with Network-LHD projects in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, joined forces with Cardenas' Human Resources and health insurance carriers to create wellness committees at each Cardenas Market location. Twenty-eight Cardenas locations across the three counties have adopted elements of the California Fit Business Kit, utilizing the "Check for health" assessment checklist and among other changes, increasing the availability of fresh drinking water for employees. The various wellness committees have adopted the "Go for H2O" tool to encourage employees to stay hydrated with water throughout the day. Employee participation across all Cardenas locations has nearly doubled in the past year.

*Increasing produce availability in neighborhood stores.* Don Baratón is a small convenience store located in Historic Filipinotown, and was one of the 17 small stores in the area that previously did not offer fresh produce for customers. Based on the results of a needs assessment completed in partnership with the Asian Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance (APIOPA), Network-LHD staff provided technical assistance and training, including proper produce storage techniques and guidance on creating visually appealing produce displays. Store owners began stocking produce, and APIOPA helped fund an energy-efficient refrigeration unit to properly store fresh produce. The store continues to sell fresh produce, including to the families of students attending the adjacent school. Network-LHD retail staff continues to work with at least ten other stores across the County, providing technical assistance on strategies for increasing the availability and quality of fresh produce.

*Increasing availability of fresh produce through community gardens.* Network-LHD staff provided technical assistance and support to Esperanza Community Housing Corporation (ECHC), with the goal of increasing availability and consumption of produce in one South Los Angeles community. ECHC recruited residents and began conducting nutrition education classes using a peer-to-peer model at Villa Esperanza in the spring of 2014. The classes were accompanied by a series of resident engagement meetings, which allowed tenants to share their concerns regarding the health of their families and develop potential solutions to facilitate healthier lifestyles. As a result of these meetings, a committed group of residents emerged as champions for creating an on-site edible garden. In collaboration with the University of California Cooperative Extension, ECHC educated residents on the health benefits of seasonal produce, techniques for planting and harvesting, and maintenance needs for the garden. As of August 2014, residents have planted a variety of edible plants including tomatoes, green beans, radishes, strawberries, and cilantro, all of which are now available to all residents of Villa Esperanza. Through this complementary approach of delivering nutrition education while advancing an environmental change strategy to increase fresh produce access, Network-LHD

staff supported ECHC in empowering residents to improve their own diets and serve as advocates for broader food systems change in their community.

*Promoting active transportation and safe streets.* Network-LHD staff provided technical assistance and support of a complete streets policy and bicycle parking ordinance in the City of El Monte. This youth-led effort, with oversight by our funded partner Day One, included the mentoring of youth to interact with local stakeholders and community members, bicycle and walkability assessments, a “Photo Voice” project, and partnership development with other organizations such as BikeSGV, El Monte/South El Monte Best Start, El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education, among others. Although the City of El Monte has yet to adopt a policy, momentum is building towards adoption. A draft complete streets policy and bicycle parking language has been provided to city staff, accompanied by support from El Monte’s City Manager.

*Increasing access to fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets.* Network-LHD staff provided technical assistance and support for the acceptance of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) at local farmers’ markets. Through a partnership with the Ecology Center, our funded partner Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA) received guidance on updated protocols for implementing farmers’ market EBT access at the Glassell Park farmers’ market. Prior to the market opening, SEE-LA applied for a point-of-sale EBT device through the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service. The market is now equipped with a centralized system that allows SNAP recipients to visit the market operator’s booth and exchange EBT dollars for tokens accepted by all market produce stands. In addition to accepting EBT, the market will be receiving funding through the Seeds of Change Foundation to operate a Market Match healthy incentive program beginning in fall/winter 2014, which will increase the fresh produce buying power of CalFresh and WIC customers.

## **County Nutrition Action Plan**

The goal of the County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) is to coordinate and leverage nutrition messages, education, and services between federally funded nutrition assistance programs (FFNAPs) and other applicable agencies in Los Angeles County to increase availability and access to healthy foods for the low-income population. Objectives include increasing knowledge of services provided by member agencies, improving coordination of community outreach and media efforts by synchronizing nutrition messages and media campaigns, increasing participation of the target audience in programs offered by partner agencies through bi-directional referrals, and evaluating the impact of CNAP efforts. Member agencies include USDA/Food and Nutrition Service-funded and non-funded partners such as the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the Supplementary Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), the Los Angeles Unified School District Food Services Department, the City of Long Beach Department of Public Health, and the Pasadena Public Health Department.

Network-LHD staff convened and facilitated two CNAP meetings, in April and August 2014. Following the April meeting, CNAP workgroups were created to achieve objectives related to coordinating media messaging and increasing program participation through bi-directional referrals. CNAP meetings have been scheduled and will continue in Year 3.

## **Community/Media Events**

In collaboration with DPSS, Network-LHD staff coordinated CalFresh Awareness Month efforts to educate SNAP-Ed eligible communities and CalFresh recipients on the importance of healthy eating and active living. As part of CalFresh Awareness Month, staff conducted eleven promotional events across Los Angeles County, reaching approximately 1,200 individuals. In addition, a community outreach plan was implemented that reached an additional 600 individuals through coordinated messaging and material distribution by Network-LHD staff and both funded and non-funded community partners.

In September 2014, Network-LHD staff hosted a Latino Health Awareness Month event at Superior Grocers in Lynwood that launched a healthy marketing pilot project, “Kids Champion Snacks.” This event reached approximately 100 families, encouraging parents to take steps to protect their children from obesity-related health problems. Champions for Change “Harvest Hero” characters were installed on the floor of each aisle, providing nutrition education messages to encourage shoppers to choose healthy foods. In addition, food label icons were placed on aisle shelves to help customers identify healthy snacks.

Network-LHD staff coordinated the placement of CDPH-approved television, radio and billboard ads in the County. Staff created and implemented a media placement plan that garnered approximately 100,000,000 media impressions through English- and Spanish-language media outlets. The “Not My Kids”/”A Mis Hijos No” ads encouraged parents to focus on improving their families’ intake of fruits and vegetables and to increase physical activity. “Join the Movement”/”Unase al Movimiento” ads encouraged community members to join the movement for healthy change and help fight childhood obesity in their communities.

## **Quantitative Outcomes**

Because we are only in Year 2 of the four-year grant period, we have limited information on quantitative outcomes to date. However, evaluation plans are being implemented. For example, we have augmented two pre-existing random digit dial telephone surveys (a WIC survey and the Los Angeles County Health Survey) with questions targeted specifically to the SNAP-Ed eligible population. We have contracted with Ad Lucem Consulting to conduct context scans and inventories of both PSE strategies and nutrition education services. We have also contracted with Sarah Samuels Center and UCLA to conduct intercept surveys and environmental assessments in both large and small retail grocery stores and markets, as well as faith-based organizations that are implementing nutrition and physical activity promotion policies and related educational services. These evaluations will provide valuable information on the SNAP-Ed eligible population (their knowledge, intentions, awareness of programming, and health behaviors), and on the surrounding environments and public health infrastructure.

The evaluation will also include collection of qualitative data through focus groups and case study analysis to provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of the programmatic efforts. Contractors are being trained to use a State model, referred to as the Communities of Excellence in Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (CX3), to assess community environments and mobilize communities in support of PSE projects.

## Lessons Learned

1. Efforts are needed to maximize spending of grant funds. In Year 2, we spent approximately \$11.5 million (74%) of our total allocation of \$15.6 million. Factors that contributed to this reduced spending included: 1) underspending by contractors, resulting in approximately \$1.9 million in savings; 2) County salary and indirect cost savings of approximately \$500,000; 3) the media solicitation process which resulted in a low bid that was \$1.2 million below the Year 2 allocation for media; 3) underspending of \$430,000 on evaluation; and 4) a four-month delay in the State's processing of a budget modification request. Despite this underspending, we met or exceeded all programmatic deliverables. Nonetheless, efforts are needed to increase grant spending in Years 3 and 4 to maximize program benefits. Specific measures that will be taken or are currently underway include: 1) outreach to the State to expedite budget modification requests and submission of more frequent requests; 2) development of an "allowable expense tool" in collaboration with the State that will assist contractors in increasing their spending; 3) prioritized efforts to fill County positions; and 4) an additional media solicitation in Year 3 that will specify a narrower spending range.
2. Establishing and maintaining partnerships are critically important for the success of the project. Collaboration with both internal and external partners has been central to achieving programmatic goals. Partnerships across County departments, with opportunities to meet regularly afforded by our CNAP, have emerged as an effective method for making progress on grant deliverables and for reaching the target audience. Our ongoing relationships with Department of Public Social Services, WIC implementing agencies, the Area Offices on Aging, UCCE, and health departments from Long Beach and Pasadena have not only expanded our reach but have improved the utility of our efforts.

Funded partners are essential to reaching programmatic goals and in maintaining communication and trust with community groups, other CBOs, and the populations they serve. These partnerships will continue to be nurtured over the next programmatic year, with the intention of developing and maintaining relationships that will be mutually beneficial for years beyond the grant period.